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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000132

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [KPAO](#)

SUBJECT: PD CONTACT IN GAZA SEES "NO PLACE TO GO, AND NO ONE TO TURN TO."

REF: A. JERUSALEM 116

[B](#). JERUSALEM 78

[C](#). JERUSALEM 72

[D](#). JERUSALEM 49

[E](#). JERUSALEM 38

[F](#). JERUSALEM 30

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#). (C) Summary. As the Israeli military operation in Gaza ended its 18th day, a Post PD partner vividly described the severe psychological strain Gazans face as a result of internal displacement and humanitarian suffering. Dr. Awni Karzon, American Corner Gaza Director, spoke of danger and physical privations as a result of the fighting in Gaza, the psychological strain of being totally dependent on the hospitality of others, and the realization that he has nowhere to go. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) Through daily telcons with American Corner Gaza Director Dr. Awni Karzon, Post has charted the "odyssey" of this close PD contact and Fulbright alumnus since the start of the Israeli military operation on December 27 (see Reftels). Karzon and his family became homeless when his apartment building was severely damaged by an IAF airstrike on January 1. On January 5, he was evicted from a second apartment by 18 Hamas fighters who requisitioned the building for use as a base of operations. Karzon and his family then sought shelter in a friend's apartment, where they share a small space (with only one bathroom) with up to 30 people.

[3](#). (C) Karzon remained stoic throughout these ordeals, stressing to PDOff that he and his family were getting by. However, during a January 13 telcon, Karzon admitted he is starting to crack under the psychological strain of caring for his five children amidst the fear, privations, and frustration of being homeless. He broke down and cried when he told PDOff that he and his family are no longer welcome at his friend's house, even though Karzon continues to provide most of the food, spending upwards of 200 NIS of his own funds per day on vegetables and canned goods for over 30 people.

[4](#). (C) Karzon said his friend is under enormous pressure to take in more and more relatives displaced by the fighting and the destruction. As more family members arrive, they have made clear to Karzon that he is unwanted. Karzon and his family remain outside in the cold during the daytime, in an uncovered yard, to avoid disturbing his friend and the extended family. Karzon said he is considering moving his family to an UNRWA shelter, but is worried that his children (including a 15-month-old boy) may not be able to tolerate the cold at night. He has heard the shelters are overcrowded and desperately short on supplies.

[5](#). (C) Karzon expressed frustration that he has "no place to go, and no one to turn to." There are no apartments

available for rent, so Karzon must choose between remaining an unwelcome guest at his friend's apartment, or going to an overcrowded UNRWA shelter. He is deeply discouraged by the situation, disappointed in his friend, and audibly exhausted, with nerves frayed after 18 days of airstrikes, interrupted sleep, and severe privations. These include extended electricity outages and the day-to-day uncertainties about the availability of food and water. (NOTE: ConGen has not received a response to its exit permit request for Karzon and his family from the GOI.)

¶6. (C) In a torrent of fear and frustration, Karzon told PDOff that " Hamas has no morality at all. They think they're heroes, courageous fighters, God-sent." He firmly believes Hamas will survive the current Israeli attacks, if in a weakened state. When they finish fighting Israel, Karzon said, "(Hamas) will take revenge on the Gazans who are not on their side, who did not fight. They will come after me."

¶7. (SBU) Post has offered Karzon and his family use of the PD office in Gaza as a temporary refuge.

WALLES